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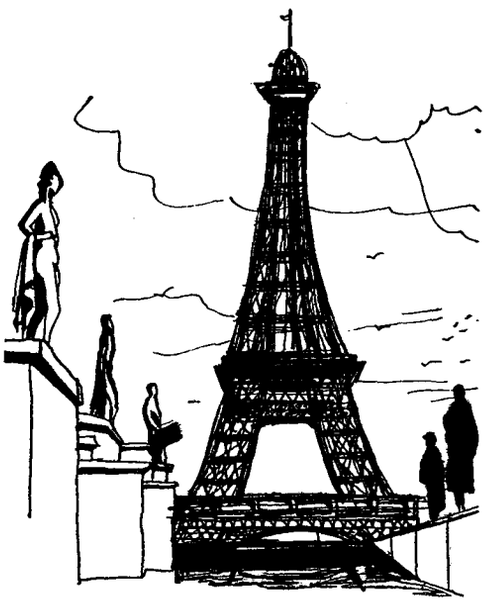
A SICILIAN GANDHI

—Gunnar D. Kumlien

THE Commonweal



Ambiguous Engagement

THE POLITICS OF SARTRE

by Thomas Molnar

Self-Examination

CATHOLICS IN AMERICA

by J. N. Moody

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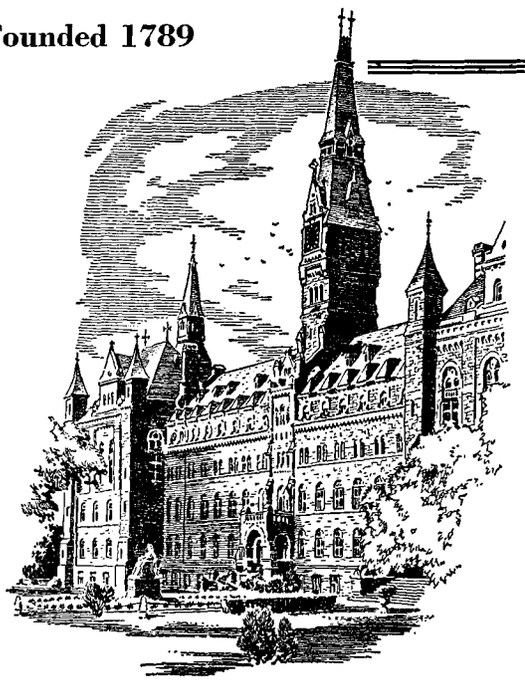

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

MR. DULLES AND THE PRESS

LAST WEEK Secretary of State Dulles began to negotiate with representatives of the press on a compromise formula by which a limited number of newsmen would be permitted to enter Communist China. This is being hailed as good news, but it seems to us to leave the situation as unsatisfactory as it ever was. Mr. Dulles' relations with the press have never been particularly happy, but his ban on news coverage of China has been and is an especially sore point.

The Communist government in China expelled all American correspondents shortly after it came to power, but last year it offered to raise the Bamboo Curtain to the extent of permitting some United States newsmen to enter the country. The State Department, however, forbade any American reporters to go to China, and Mr. Dulles justified this order with a series of lame and somewhat contradictory reasons.

Some of these reasons: that the United States does not recognize Red China and there are thus no diplomatic facilities for protecting United States citizens there; that the United States should not send reporters into Communist China while U.S. citizens were held prisoner there; that although the Chinese Communists had offered to release these prisoners if we would send newsmen in, the United States could not accede to such "blackmail."

Representatives of the press felt that they should be allowed to visit any country with which the United States was not at war or where there was not a clear military-security reason for their staying out. They believed the Administration's ban to be an abridgement of the constitutional freedom of the press. And they were not reassured when Mr. Dulles declared his belief that "foreign policy and diplomacy cannot succeed unless in fact it channels the activities of our people, and in this respect newspapermen have also their loyalty and patriotic duty." Such a statement reveals a conception of the press as an arm of the government, as anything but the free institution protected from government regulation by the first article of the Bill of Rights.

THE COMPROMISE which Mr. Dulles most recently described would permit a "limited number" of correspondents—a dozen or so—to enter China for a "trial period" of six months. The press representatives to whom the plan was suggested have rejected the idea that the government should control press coverage in this way, but they have agreed to a survey which would indicate exactly how many correspondents would go to China if the ban were lifted. It has been suggested that Mr. Dulles and the State Department have recognized their tactical defeat but are determined to defend the rightness of their action to the end. The cost of maintaining correspondents in China will probably limit to the disputed dozen or so the number of news organizations which would want to do so, and the State Department could thus approve the entry of all the correspondents who wished to go to China and yet retain in theory its "right" to regulate such news coverage.

American newsmen should beware of accepting a practical victory which would involve so serious a defeat on the level of principle. So long as the State Department claims the power to decide, in peace time, in situations which do not involve military security, how many and which newsmen can visit a foreign country and how long they can stay, it is claiming the right to control the flow of information to the American people. Such a power, as we know too well, can be fatal to the life of a democracy.

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Certainly the press accepts its duty and responsibility, but it must be made clear that this responsibility is ultimately to the people and not to an Administration. Mr. Dulles must be disabused of his "total" outlook on citizen support of government policy, and his confusion of the press with a State Department instrument.

ALGERIAN NEGOTIATIONS

THE NEWS that for the first time in a year a contact has been established between not-fully-official French and Algerian negotiators has opened up new horizons. If somehow these parleys can be carried through to success, France itself will be delivered from a major source of its present political and economic difficulties and can resume an effective role in the essential NATO defense system. A mutually acceptable solution would bring to a long-awaited end a large-scale armed conflict marked by fearful atrocities on both sides. It would then permit at long last the sort of development program that recent French colonial policies and mounting population pressures upon meager productive resources have made urgent. There is some prospect of peace in Algeria, of a shift of human energies and ingenuity to vitally needed tasks of peace.

Up to now the prospect remains a rather tenuous one. There are propitious developments such as the transfer of National Liberation Front headquarters from Cairo to Tunis and the reputed willingness of some of the Moslem leaders to accept French recognition of Algeria's "National Vocation" in place of the immediate and complete independence which for months the Moslems have demanded as the basic requirement for starting negotiations.

On the French side there is growing public pressure for a solution, inspired both by humane sentiments and by the crippling burden of supporting an overseas operation involving four hundred thousand men. The French are likewise conscious that the Algerian question is on the UN docket for early fall; they have little or no progress to show for the respite granted them last February. The announcement of a ten-year plan for Algerian development and the promise of a new political statute for Algeria—as well as a thorny proposal of partition into Moslem and European sectors—comprise evidence of a renewed effort on the part of the French leaders to bring this tragic conflict to a close.

The obstacles are manifold. Within both camps there are important elements determined on a fight to a finish. In France even within the dominant Socialist party extreme differences exist among its leaders. The aforementioned negotiations, begun with Government approval, for instance, were thrown into great jeopardy when Abdel Chakar of Tunis went to France to obtain the approval by the imprisoned Ahmed ben Bella of the new basis for negotiations and was summarily arrested. Differences between Moslem nationalists were brutally signalized several weeks ago by the massacre of the male population of a whole native village.

There is such a thing as war-weariness. A time comes when even the most obdurate have to recognize that continued expenditure of life and limb and a nation's material substance is in vain. Things appear to have reached this stage in Algeria. It is this situation, plus the renewed efforts of enlightened spirits on both sides of the battle lines, that holds out some hope that a truce could actually be in the making.

NEXT WEEK

PHILIP SCHARPER writes about scholasticism in general and about the greatest of the scholastics, St. Thomas Aquinas, in particular.

"Thomism has become vital and productive in the American present, but for the most part Thomists speak only to Thomists in the language of Thomists. The non-Catholic philosopher usually feels that he is overhearing an obviously animated discussion being conducted in a foreign tongue."

UNPOPULAR DECISIONS

RECENT DECISIONS of the Supreme Court in the Jencks, Watkins and Smith Act cases were received with largely critical comment from the American Catholic Press. When the editors of The Commonweal, which welcomed the decisions, saw a news story in the Brooklyn *Tablet* they thought momentarily that most of the American people disapproved of the recent decisions.

But only momentarily. Although the news story was entitled "Supreme Court's Recent Rulings Unpopular," the story itself scarcely supported the title. For people were asked "whether they agree or disagree with the opinion that the Court is tending to intrude upon Congress and is in effect making

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laws." The responses were Agree . . . 36.9%, Disagree . . . 55.7%, No Opinion . . . 7.2%.

The decisions about which they were asked included those on desegregation, the tidal lands dispute, and several rulings of local effect. Given the nature of the question, the controversial issues and the local prejudices involved—so that strong disapproval or resentment concerning one ruling would determine the answer to a question involving many rulings—what is surprising is that so many people evidently approved of recent Court action. So many indeed, that the news story might well have been titled "Supreme Court's Recent Rulings Popular."

RETURN OF THE POPULAR FRONT?

EVER SINCE the death of Stalin, great twists and turns have been taking place in the Communist line all over the world. In this country, the Communist Party clearly plans to continue and intensify its efforts to promote a "united front" with non-Communists. Out of five resolutions outlining official Communist policy which were recently adopted by its national committee, for example, three stressed the idea of Communist collaboration with "progressive" forces.

These resolutions passed by the national committee provide a good indication of Communist hopes and intentions for the immediate future. One ordered the creation of a national cultural committee to foster collaboration with non-Communist artists, stressing the necessity of appealing to Negro, Puerto Rican, Mexican, and other minority groups. Another resolution blamed the anti-Semitic purges and the liquidation of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union on Stalin and promised that the present regime would correct this situation—a promise not supported by reports from Russia and likely to impress Jews in this country not at all. A third resolution called for the establishment of a national farm commission to work among small and middle-income farmers, again with particular attention to Negroes, Mexicans, Indians and members of other minority groups, and again placing particular emphasis on the need to seek cooperation from "left, radical and pro-Socialist" forces.

What is involved here, then, is another in a series of efforts by the Communist Party to recapture some semblance of political respectability. As the Party theoreticians evidently see the matter, this can best be done by promoting the "Popular Front" mentality of the thirties. At that time, this tactic was very successful, and the Communists then had influence far beyond their actual numbers. Now the question is whether the maneuver to gain protective coloring from genuine reform groups will work again.

No one can predict the answer to such questions with any degree of certainty, of course, but to us it seems highly unlikely that this Communist move will have much success, at least among those with any measure of practical experience or political sophistication. Liberal and labor groups learned years ago that it is impossible to collaborate with Communists, for the Communists demonstrated time and time again that they would wreck any organization they could not control for their own purposes. This is a lesson that was learned the hard way, and we do not think it will be easily forgotten. Nor does the death of Stalin and all that has happened since really change the situation, for the policy of rule-or-ruin reflects the nature of the Communist Party, rather than the temperament of particular individuals who happen to be in power at one time or another.

There are people, it is true, who argue that Communists and non-Communists should work together now, in order to encourage individual Communists to break with the Party, as thousands are reported to have done since Hungary. But we emphatically disagree with this position. Individual Communists should certainly be encouraged to leave the Party. But in our opinion any kind of official or organizational collaboration will slow down rather than hasten such a process, precisely because such cooperation provides the Communist Party with an undeserved air of respectability.

We are certainly not alone in this position and we think any collaboration by the bulk of liberal and labor forces is therefore highly improbable. As far as the effect of a real Communist drive among minority groups is concerned, however, the situation may be somewhat different.

Despite the injustices they have suffered, American Negroes have already shown an almost unbelievably strong resistance to Communism; it is improbable that the Party will now succeed in their case where it has failed before. As for the Puerto Ricans, we hope the story will be the same, but we doubt that anyone knows at this point just how much success the Communists might have among them. But in this connection we would only mention one point which, if it is obvious, is also important.

Any sizable success by the Communists among the Puerto Ricans or other minority groups will come about only if they are able to take advantage

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of the exploitation and injustice from which these groups suffer. Here in New York, for instance, a large part of the Puerto Rican community lives in some of the most miserable housing that can be found anywhere in the country. They live in poverty, and suffer from racial and national prejudice. Tragically enough, many of them have even found that the unions which should be helping them are only fronts for racketeering and exploitation by men hiding behind the union label. Yet the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists, which has taken the lead in exposing racketeering by false labor leaders at the expense of Puerto Ricans, receives lamentably little financial and moral support in its work.

The moral here, we think, is clear. There can be no Popular Front with the Communists, because no one who understands anything about the Party or the way it operates can join such a thing. But the work of a group like the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists among the Puerto Ricans deserves more support than it has yet received. For the current Communist program which tries to reach minority groups only underlines what is already the pressing duty of all—to work against racial and social injustice wherever it exists.

RELIGION IN THE CENSUS?

A CONSIDERABLE number of people and organizations would be interested in the facts about religious affiliation in America which would be turned up if a question on the subject were included in the 1960 census. Sociologists would obtain much to mull over from such figures. Various church bodies themselves would find them highly informative. Publishers, distributors of religious articles, food suppliers and others would greatly welcome the information that would result. Indications are, moreover, that the great majority of Americans would not object if the census taker were to ask them, among other things: "What is your religion?"

Despite the useful data such a question would supply, we would oppose its inclusion in the next federal census—principally on the grounds that it would constitute invasion of personal privacy. For here is the sort of question which the government has no right to put to the individual citizen, whose rights of conscience are sacrosanct, and this fact is of such paramount importance that it outweighs all the arguments in favor of including a question on religious affiliation in the census.

A CONSERVATIVE REVIEW

THIS SUMMER has seen the publication of a new conservative review, *Modern Age*. In their "Apology for a New Review" the editors of this quarterly say: "This is not a time in which serious journals prosper; and of such journals as are left to us in America, the majority are professedly liberal or radical. There is room in America for many liberal and radical journals of opinion; we hope there is also room for some conservative journals. *Modern Age* intends to pursue a conservative policy for the sake of a liberal understanding."

That this is not a time in which serious journals flourish is undeniably true. Their difficulties continue to grow and their numbers to decline, so that any addition to their ranks must be welcomed. And The Commonweal, which has been both acclaimed and denounced for its liberal policies, has for years advocated the publication of a responsible journal which would express the conservative viewpoint.

Although The Commonweal has been termed "liberal," and the editors have no desire to disown the responsibilities that should properly go with that term, it might more properly be termed "catholic." For if the editors themselves tend to take what is termed a liberal position, The Commonweal has opened its pages to both "liberal" and "conservative" contributors. It has, indeed, published some of the strongest, most cogent statements of the conservative position. This is one of the reasons why it has been, and will undoubtedly continue to be, a controversial magazine, why—though it has escaped a middle-of-the-road label—it has been attacked for being too "liberal" or too "conservative." This is also one of the reasons why we were not surprised to find that almost half of the contributors to the first issue of *Modern Age*, including its editor Russell Kirk, had contributed to The Commonweal.

Modern Age starts out, then, with much in its favor. It has a fine opportunity to focus the dispersed conservative viewpoint. It has a high purpose, "to stimulate discussion of the great moral and social and political and economic and literary questions of the hour, and to search for means by which the legacy of our civilization may be kept safe." And it has what promises to be an admirable body of contributors. With the hope that *Modern Age* (64 East Jackson Blvd., Chicago 4, Illinois) will fulfill its expectations we welcome the new quarterly to the arena of serious controversy.

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The Politics of Sartre

"FOR SARTRE COMMUNISM WAS THE MOST POWERFUL ELEMENT OF THE TOTAL SITUATION IN WHICH HE AND HIS GENERATION FOUND THEMSELVES"

THOMAS MOLNAR

DURING THE LAST WAR there were only two camps in France: Nazism and freedom. After the liberation, however, the camp of freedom became divided, the old conflicts reappeared, and Right and Left were once again facing each other across the barricades of ideology. This was not due entirely to the four-year *déchirement* between Vichy and Free France. What happened was that fast-developing events in the cold war projected the domestic conflict in an enlarged form on the screen of world politics, where the United States came willy-nilly to be identified with bourgeois interests, while the Soviets continued to stand for the working classes. In ideologically divided France, whoever favored one or the other great power was automatically counted as committing himself to the proletariat or the middle class.

Given this clear-cut choice, it was difficult to remain in any position midway. Intellectual integrity would have perhaps demanded that the writer and the philosopher should not choose, but such neutrality seemed to be impossible and, at any rate, theoretic. As Sartre said, no choice is a choice too.

The post-World War I generation had witnessed the weaknesses and villainies of 1918-1939. Prone to a utopian mentality, it signed up with the revolution preached by the Communists, which helped it weather defeat, occupation, and resistance. It is true that after hearing "revolution" proclaimed by so many orators, the majority was rather vague about its meaning. "This is a revolution," Aimé Patri wrote in 1946, "that everybody accepts as a necessity, without inquiring what it really means." But to a few it was clear enough: unreserved cooperation with the working class against the existing bourgeois system. "The men of my age," wrote Sartre in February 1956, "know it very well: the great reality of their lives, more important even than the two world wars, was their encounter with the working class and its ideology. This offered us an inattackable vision of the world and of ourselves. To us Marxism is not only a philosophy; it is the climate of our ideas, the milieu in which they feed, the true progression of what Hegel called the Objective Spirit."

Sartre is a Marxist, not a Communist. Marxism was "the milieu in which his ideas matured," and the hope that some day "the conscience of society will not be delegated to a few, but will be the expression of all." Communism, on the other hand, as distinct from Marxism, was not for Sartre a goal in itself; it was, rather, the most powerful element of the total situation in which he and his generation found themselves. Moreover, it was the only organized force which could actually claim the loyalty of the proletarian masses. To reach these masses, one had to find an understanding with the Communists, if need be by hammering together a new party, unsoiled by previous compromises and alliances, and freely collaborating with the Communists in a new Popular Front.

AN ATTEMPT to translate this plan into reality was made in 1948, after the governing coalition of M.R.P., Socialists, and Communists had broken up. Once more it seemed that party-politics won out over the nation's will to change; the country threatened to fall back into a state of *immobilisme*. The parting of the two largest leftist parties forced the hesitating intellectuals, who had supported them as a block, to choose between them.

A messianic expectation swept through Saint-Germain-des-Prés, the existentialist headquarters. Political programs were put together, members recruited, and manifestoes drawn up. Sartre and David Rousset, an ex-concentration camp inmate who now declared war on all *régimes concentrationnaires,* saw the moment ripe for the creation of a movement above the parties, like de Gaulle's R.P.F. but, of course, with a leftist orientation. This was to be the *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire,* favoring for France "an economic and political structure in which the state shall wither away while the intellectual and manual workers will democratically decide on their destinies."

Nothing came of this ambitious program, or, for that matter, of the supra-partisan *Rassemblement*. As

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Miss Beauvoir explained years later, Sartre finally understood his group's weakness and gave up the idea of a front of the non-Communist Left. Instead, he chose to "ally himself with the real forces" which are able to succeed where he had failed. He drew closer to the Communists, writing articles and books favorable to their cause and strategy. Yet he never joined the Communist Party. Why?

Sartre had explained his position in an important article in June 1946, "*Matérialisme et Révolution.*" What is it, he asks, that stands between so many young intellectuals and the Communist Party? First of all, it is the latter's materialistic philosophy which the young intellectuals in general—and Sartre in particular —reject. Opting for the revolution is a free act based on intelligent reasoning, but "a captive intelligence, governed from outside and chained to blind causes, would no longer be an intelligence." Materialism denies freedom, denies the possibility of changing the world by freely chosen acts. It ignores the subjectivity of the oppressed individual, and thus discourages his revolutionary efforts. In opposition to this philosophy, the true revolutionary spirit rejects the idea that history has been written in advance. Whoever claims the insight to predict the course of history thereby limits our freedom. "Since man is free," Sartre concludes, "there can be no guarantee that socialism will triumph."

But Sartre's rejection of the bourgeois mentality and way of life is equally definitive. He condemns the bourgeoisie's social and economic privileges, colonialist adventures, alleged alliance with Fascism. In his view, however, the bourgeoisie is not merely a social class, to be studied in Marxist terms exclusively; it is also a state of mind. According to Sartre, the bourgeois lives in ignorance of the basic stuff of existence, which is anguish and freedom. Stingy with his consciousness as with his money, he hides behind appearances and false values instead of facing the problems of life and its responsibilities.

In *La Nausée* Sartre describes the self-satisfied citizens of Bouville as they take their Sunday afternoon stroll on the promenade. The notabilities of the town, the reader is told, are at pains to imitate their ancestors' portraits in the municipal picture gallery. These ancestors were "respectable" because they lived for the social order, accumulated wealth, brought up children, and otherwise fulfilled their duties as citizens. Their highest ambition was to play their roles well, to incarnate the image that generations of equally respectable people had created of bourgeois virtues, and which they accepted without asking questions. All their lives they lived for their biography and posed for the portrait painter.

We now understand why there is for Sartre a double sin—social and philosophical—attached to being a bourgeois, and why the characters in Sartre's plays and novels try so desperately to escape middle-class condition. In order to succeed, the first task is to break the chain of illusions and assume one's freedom. In the given historical situation of Sartre's generation, this goal seemed best achieved by denouncing the politically and socially bankrupt system, and by plunging into the Hegelian-Marxian "stream of history." The intellectuals, pained by the hesitations and hypocrisy of the regime, were easily captivated by the harmony of the Communist siren song and the consistency of Marxist doctrine. "The intellectuals," wrote Raymond Aron in a recent book, "cannot tolerate the chance-event, the unintelligible; they have a nostalgia for the Absolute, for a universally comprehensive system."

ALTHOUGH SARTRE's hopes of establishing a political party were reduced to nil after the failure of his *Rassemblement,* he became the gray eminence of the non-Communist intellectual Left. His great prestige as a philosopher, the authoritative tone of his magazine, *Les Temps Modernes,* and his travels in Communist and satellite lands, maintained him as a center of intrigued interest, indeed, as a sage. He seemed to have inherited on the French philosophico-literary scene the role once held by André Gide as a *contemporain capital,* the witness of human (and political) frailties, the observer with the deepest insights.

During this period, from 1949 to 1954, his work as a writer may be divided into two categories. As a philosopher, he was branching out into new fields where he saw the illustrations and the applicability of his ideas; the bulky volume devoted to the existentialist psychoanalysis of Jean Genêt (a thief and pederast turned writer), and plays like *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* and *Kean.* As a political writer, he produced analyses like *Entretiens sur la Politique, L'Affaire Henri Martin* (about a Communist sailor who refused to unload U.S. war material), *Les Communistes et la Paix,* finally the play *Nekrassov.*

What is the main line of these political writings,

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devoted mainly to the defense and justification of Communism, Stalinism and the proletariat? Sartre, a brilliant professor of philosophy and a highly skilled dialectician, is a rather elusive political writer. It is very hard to pin him down since the two sides of his being—the intellectual who values freedom above all and the lover of firmly defined political systems—are in constant conflict with one another.

Sartre sought to justify Communist policies and practices ideologically, but he did not hesitate to criticize sharply Communist leaders and publicists. For their part, the latter had arrived early at a correct diagnosis of Sartre's ideological reliability. They understood that for reasons of his own, reasons grounded in his philosophy of *engagement* rather than in his Marxist convictions, Sartre was not committed to the Communist cause as an end but as a means. The violent debates that Communist publicists conducted with Sartre for years convinced them that he could never be metamorphosed into a true believer. He simply looked at French Communism as a source of renovation for the country, as the only genuine movement with roots in the "masses" and therefore in reality. While the Communist Party needed intellectuals for their prestige-value and the services they rendered by sowing confusion in bourgeois ranks, Sartre, the arch-intellectual, expected the Party to be a true vanguard of proletarian aspirations as *he* interpreted them.

The misunderstanding between Sartre and the Communists may be illustrated by an article that he published in his magazine in February 1956. Note the date: it is the month when Khrushchev was about to make his sensational revelations at the Twentieth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, calling into question the last twenty-five years of Communist history, attacking dictator Stalin and, by implication, the party leadership abroad which had supported him, like Thorez, Duclos, Aragon and others. But Sartre blissfully ignores the issues which had been agitating the members of Communist high echelons in Russia and outside since Stalin's death. Instead, he reproaches the French Communist Party for standing in the way of the free flowering of Marxist thought, art, and science. Marxist thought, he says, is the only hope left for the rejuvenation of France, now in a condition of "cultural servility." Then he continues: "Between the last jugglings of the middle class which had lost its pride, and the obstinate silence of the Communist intellectuals, French civilization falls into ruins. We, other intellectuals, live in a rarified atmosphere . . . asphyxiated. The only thing we demand of Marxism is that it become alive, that it shake off its mental laziness, that it give us all it can."

Khrushchev's speech dramatizes the decade-long attitude of Sartre (and other fellow travelers). For years, the most important single point in Sartre's pro-Communist writings was that the existence in the Soviet Union of abuses, degradations, slave-camps, and the like should not be mentioned and discussed because such publicity would weaken the proletarian cause all over the world. On this issue he was ready to break with good friends like Rousset, Camus, and philosopher Merleau-Ponty who now occupies Bergson's chair at the Collège de France. Sartre's line of reasoning in the pages of his *Les Temps Modernes* was this: the Soviet regime is a far cry from the Marxist-Leninist teachings. Nevertheless, the Soviets are more likely to lead mankind towards progress than is the Western world. Therefore, every denunciation of the Soviets, even if based on evidence, weakens the forces of progress and strengthens conservatism and reaction. As long as Soviet Russia exists, the enemies of the working class will have to be on the defensive. With the Soviets discredited or defeated, the proletariat would lose its only hope.

IT BECAME evident in the late forties, after the dismemberment of the governing coalition, that the Communists would be what de Gaulle termed "foreign nationalists," working for the Kremlin's interests. In 1947 they had tried to disrupt the reconstruction of the land by a prolonged strike of the coal miners. Then they further incensed public opinion by declaring that Communist militants would not take up arms against the Soviet Army, should the latter invade the country in pursuit of aggressors. Similar statements and tactics made it obvious even to sympathizers that the French Communist Party was not the best guardian of proletarian interests because, aside from other considerations, its intransigence might stiffen the resistance of the regime and drive the middle class into the arms of de Gaulle.

It was against such tactical errors that Sartre, Rousset, and their friends wanted to warn the masses of workers. "The Communist Party," wrote Merleau-Ponty at the time, "is leading the proletariat in the name of an *idea* of the proletariat, borrowed from Marxist philosophy of history. The theory, however, does not seem to coincide with the will and sentiments of the proletariat." He struck a new note in the debate by reminding the reader that the formerly clear-cut opposition between employers and workers was modified by the new look of American capitalism which, in a young and dynamic country, is no longer conservative. On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty wrote, the Soviet Union, having discarded the humanistic inspiration of Marxism, actually betrays the revolution. Under the circumstances, and in order to help readjust the public's vision, the task of the intellectual was to re-examine his own ideological position and that of the proletariat.

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Such a readjustment became unexpectedly urgent after the Hungarian uprising of last October, and the evolution of events since then, in Hungary as well as in Poland. For one thing, it has turned out that Communist parties have far more reason to fear the intellectuals in their own ranks than the fellow travelers. In Hungary it was the (officially) Communist intelligentsia which gave the signal to revolt against political despotism and bureaucratic servitude. In France it was Pierre Hervé, for a long time editorialist of *L'Humanité,* who denounced the sclerosis of the Communist party and demanded de-Stalinization six months before the Khrushchev speech. For another thing, even the sympathizers and indifferent ones who had tolerated Communist bossism in various organizations of workers, writers, and students, are now giving free expression to their revulsion. Many writers are dropping their membership in the *Comité National des Ecrivains* which, under the presidency of fellow traveling Vercors, had failed to protest against such things as the purges in the satellite countries, the anti-Semitism following the Moscow "doctors' plot," and the like. The so-called bourgeois intellectuals are the vindicated heroes of the day.

Thus Sartre is out-distanced on all sides. From his postwar position as a bold pioneer of *rapprochement* with the Communists, he is now forced into an ambiguous role, that of denouncing the Home of the Revolution and, implicitly, denouncing himself for the support he had given it. The old commitment, however, is still strong.

To his November article in *L'Express,* announcing his definite break with the Communists, he recently added some second thoughts. In a preface to the January 1957 issue of *Les Temps Modernes* (which is devoted, in its entirety, to the Hungarian events), Sartre suggests, in substance, that in its present form the French Communist Party is not viable. "If various *trends of thought* within the party are not allowed to express themselves and must become *factions,* then the party-structure should be reconstructed and a new party-constitution worked out."

In other words, Sartre again eludes the issue. He is ready to find fault with the *organization,* but not with the basic *philosophy* of the party. When, in concluding his one hundred and twenty-page preface, Sartre offers his "intellectual resources" for the work of reconstruction, one may well wonder if anything has changed in his outlook. Neither a fellow traveler, nor an independent philosopher, Sartre suffers the fate of his fictional heroes who are forever unable to decide to which side they belong.

SELF-EXAMINATION

Catholics in America

J. N. MOODY

THERE IS A tendency among Catholic intellectuals to discuss the Church in America from a utopian position. They incline to make a visual image of what they would like it to be and then criticize it for not living up to specifications. Father Walter J. Ong's recent book, *Frontiers in American Catholicism,* (Macmillan. $2.50.) provides a necessary corrective to this ahistorical attitude. It requires some restraint to discuss this book, which is the product of a penetrating mind, keen in its probing and willing to hazard in its conclusions. For when such a mind is directed to an examination of a subject as pertinent and valuable as American Catholic culture, there is the danger that one's critical sense may well be muffled by a great hurrah for the author.

Before I succumb to the temptation, it must be noted that this is a collection of essays, not an ordered examination of a single theme. Two of them have appeared in *Thought* and The Commonweal; another escaped general notice in the French Jesuit review *Études;* a fourth was a lecture at a Catholic college for women; and the last two, previously unpublished, flesh out the volume.

The author is not unknown. Periodical publication and lecture appearances have prepared an appreciative audience. But this collection will give him new stature among those who have only recently begun the demanding task of analyzing the general currents in American Catholicism. To the growing self-awareness of American Catholics, Father Ong has made an important contribution.

Although the essays are stimulating, they may not always induce full assent. At times I found myself in explicit disagreement, as when Toynbee was catalogued

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as a historian who thinks in cyclical terms. At other times the explanations appeared too neat to be fully convincing. It is open to debate if David Riesman's categories are adequate to explain the differences between French and American Catholicism. But these hesitations are transitory. What remains is the conviction that in Father Ong we have an American Catholic mind of the first class.

The unifying theme in this diverse material might be labeled "the implications of cultural pluralism." The author finds Catholicism in America so well adjusted to its environment that Europeans are astounded. American Catholics have assimilated the institutional context of their culture, and some of them have developed a chauvinistic enthusiasm for the American way. But when they undertake to examine their position intellectually, they tend to "view with alarm" the very pattern of acceptance in which they operate so efficiently on the practical level. The author believes that this has happened in the case of Dewey's educational theories: "American Catholics have felt called upon to focus attention on what was wrong in Dewey rather than try to assess and assimilate his real contribution to America's understanding of herself." Yet their fine achievement of parochial education owes much to the scorned leveling process in American education and as much again to the peculiarly American institution of co-education which has opened up reserves of woman power in the teaching of boys. By adopting methods unknown to traditional Catholic societies, the Church in America has built a network of schools that is without parallel in Christian history.

AMERICAN Catholics, Father Ong believes, have developed in intellectual isolation for a variety of reasons, notably the security given them by their faith and their minority position in a Protestant culture that was hostile, though generally in a genteel way. But he argues that intellectual sterility poses an ominous threat to the Church's apostolate in a dynamic society that must be understood before it can be influenced.

Catholic theory, as interpreted by Americans, has not given positive guidance to those who are building our manifold agencies in a nation whose genius has been adaptability.

As a consequence, Catholics in this country have relied almost exclusively on Europe for leadership in efforts to adjust the Church to the modern world. This exaggerated reliance on European Catholicism rests on the assumption that, since it is older in the Catholic tradition, it is necessarily more authentic. It has had its advantages and has brought us in contact with the best in European Catholic thought. But exact precedents are wanting for much that we do, or should do, and yet it never even occurs to us to suggest that we may have made some improvements on an idealized "age of faith."

This awe is often not reciprocated. "The charges urged against Catholicism in the United States—superficiality, mechanization, routine—are exactly the charges which are leveled against mass culture itself." Yet United States Catholics have pioneered in penetrating this mass culture. They have grasped its group consciousness and its organizational structure. They have used its spirit of camaraderie as effectively as they have its media of communications. They have penetrated the male world of business and sport as no other Catholics have. In fact their success in the former area prompts the author to ask: "Is the problem of Church-State alliance being superseded in America by the different problem of the Church-business world alliance?"

Catholics in this country share the optimism of their fellow Americans and use business promotional methods to spread the retreat movement. But with all this blending into the American scene, the author argues that we lack the historical sense that would strip contemporary issues of contingent factors acquired in the past and that would permit us to view our problems in the context of the present. It would be a sign of our *Catholicity* if our thought could become as much at home in America as has our Catholic life. In this direction lies the resolution of the inconsistency between our thinking and our acting. If, on the contrary, we continue to ignore the theoretical, we shall fail to make our proper contribution to American life.

THE ABOVE positions are advanced in the first three essays; in the fourth Father Ong turns to his specialty—the literary Renaissance. He notes that American Catholics have a nostalgic Medievalism which seeks a religious Golden Age and believes that it can be found in the "Greatest Century" when everyone was more or less nominally Catholic over perhaps one-thirtieth of the world's surface. It is highly unlikely, the author suggests, that this condition would provide a

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framework for present-day Catholic thought or activity. Today the Church is more obviously "catholic" than it was in the restricted area of Medieval Europe. It is even more closely knit, thanks to modern communications, as is witnessed by the unique position of the Papacy in our time.

Father Ong is thoroughly familiar with recent studies on the Renaissance. He points out that when the Renaissance humanist wished to define his position, he did so by defining his opposition to scholastic *philosophy,* not to the theology of Saint Thomas, whom he was apt to include among the Fathers of the Church. The scholastic metaphysics which interests us today has been derived from the Medieval theologians and was an object of study only for a small proportion of the students at the Medieval universities. The scholastic philosophy learned by the majority in the arts course was chiefly logic and physics. Even the texts used by this majority are relatively unknown and are of interest only to the modern historians of science and to the defenders of symbolic or mathematical logic. The Medieval students' major interest was what we would call physical science—though inaccurate by our standards—and their metaphysical speculations were of a kind that would prepare the mind of Western man for the development of Newtonian and post-Newtonian physics. The scholasticism of the arts course was radically the forerunner of the scientific world of modern times.

It was against this technical approach to knowledge that the Renaissance humanist rebelled, much as the contemporary humanist might reject the technological emphasis in our education. The Renaissance was, in one sense, anti-scientific, and in favor of a rhetorical and historical approach. It was a move away from the scholastic interest in the sciences to a deep concern with the literary monuments of antiquity. But the humanists' goal was an impossible one, and the lasting creations of the period were the creation of the vernacular languages and a further advance in physical science.

There is a lesson here for us, thinks Father Ong. We can and must learn from the past. But we cannot find there neat and clear-cut answers to our present problems. Christianity, unlike the Renaissance humanists, has always seen history in a linear aspect, which has given it an attitude of expectation and a striving towards the future when Christ will come again. American Catholics must recover this vision. When they do, they will find themselves in tune with the mood of America, which is uniquely the land of the future. What is required is that they see post-Medieval history, not as progressive "secularization," but as a gradual unfolding of an age of technology which is part of the great and mysterious evolution in time of the universe devised by God.

THERE IS NO reason to deplore the age of science. Increase in technical knowledge has been intellectually liberating and has revealed important details of man's place in the universe. Our physical science is an inspiring creation of the human mind that is not to be denounced, but must be interpreted in terms of man's purpose in the universe. For the scientific mind is not something distinct, but is simply man thinking about the universe in which he must work out his final destiny.

Such thinking is good, but what has yet to be achieved is the integration of this knowledge into Catholic theology and into our appreciation of man's spiritual ends. Christ must take possession of these advances of the intellect as one of the most glorious works of the Redemption. This can not be done in the present condition of our intellectual isolation. The author fears that our apologetic, conceived in a vacuum, has little effect on the non-Catholic world which we have hardly explored. This he sees as a major tragedy at a time when events in the United States are affecting world culture in an important way. It is the task of Catholics to project the American experience into a world perspective and to interpret it as a part of the general movement of the human spirit in its journey through history.

The author develops these positions with verve, and it is evident that many of them are open to question. His point, reminiscent of the argument of Father Hecker, that American Protestantism is burdened by too grim a theology to adjust well to American optimism, seems to ignore the capacity of the average Protestant in this country to consign this theology to the care of a band of neo-orthodox thinkers and to follow the trail blazed by Norman Vincent Peale. Besides, many American Protestant bodies, notably the successful Methodists, have repudiated it entirely. Further, his verdict on American Catholic apologists may well be too harsh. His aside on revolution as an expression of a radically static view of reality is immensely suggestive, but may pass over too lightly the capacity of a Lenin to come to terms with reality. There are other problems, too, which are insufficiently explored.

But while one may dispute steps in the analysis, the conclusions cannot be dismissed. Certainly Father Ong's appeal for an exploration of our own American heritage is most convincingly argued. It deepened my own conviction that there is a serious gap in our historical study of the whole movement of the Enlightenment, especially in its formulative influence on American culture. The need and value of such historical studies are evident from this book of Father Ong's. For he begins with the real, as conditioned by the past, and goes on to urge constructive steps that would make it possible for American Catholicism to fulfill its glorious destiny.

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HERO OF THE POOR

A Sicilian Gandhi

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

THERE ARE SLUMS in Palermo which the tourists never discover and where the police enter only well-armed and in groups of three or four. They have strange names, these slums, names of Greek and Arabic origin, and their dark inhabitants live under a pressure of misery which has only one escape valve—crime. Nobody dares to enter these stinking, narrow streets after dark. That is, nobody but Danilo Dolci, "the Sicilian Gandhi," and his fellow-workers. They are the friends and confidants of the pickpockets, prostitutes and smugglers.

As I enter this jungle with Dolci, the hostile expressions of the people change suddenly into friendliness. *Danilo!* Voices call from the windows and from the depths of the hovels all around, *Danilo, Danilo!* It is as if something ugly were extinguished in all these dark eyes and something beautiful were lit. Round his square figure men and women gather from all sides, take his hand with both theirs and soon we are followed by a swarm of children calling without interruption: *Danilo, Danilo!* He seems to know everybody and everybody seems to have important things to tell him. He stops occasionally and nods in his quiet way and looks more than anything else like an engineer on an inspection tour.

Danilo Dolci is a kind of mystery. He arrived in Sicily from the north about five years ago at one of the most miserable fishing villages on the bay of Castellamare. To the amazement of the people he began to live there as one of them in every respect, in spite of the fact that he is obviously a man of culture. And now he is known far and wide, even outside Italy, as a "Sicilian Gandhi"; he has written a couple of books which have caused sensations; he has fought the mighty on the island singlehanded at first and later with practically the whole intellectual elite of Italy behind him.

He became known all of a sudden a couple of years ago, when he started a hunger strike in the little fishing village to protest the fact that a little girl had died there of starvation. The news was a shock for the whole country. Nobody could imagine that in "normalized" Italy, so many years after the war, a child could die of starvation. Dolci declared that he intended to carry on his strike until something was done for the village. Some sort of sewage, for example, or clean drinking water, or a road worth the name, or measures against the *mafia,* who regularly killed even the small fish in the bay by fishing with illegal methods from big trawlers, thus compelling the village fishermen to unemployment and starvation.

The publicity brought the police, naturally, with their tommy guns and tear gas bombs. But Dolci turned out to be the most peaceful man on earth and there is no law according to which it is punishable to stop eating. Finally the police decided that Dolci was a harmless crank with a religious mania. But after a week of fasting Dolci collapsed and his heart was found to be very weak. All this attracted still more attention, and soon representatives of the newspapers, radio and television found their way to the hut where he was living.

THE LOCAL authorities were outraged by the publicity, which they feared could have an unfavorable influence on the tourist season. Finally, a sum of money was sent to the village, and Dolci became the overnight hero of the poor. He had with his fasting obtained what both the government and the Communists had promised and never accomplished. And even if it was only a drop in the sea, it was something. The Communists were visibly disturbed, but tried to save face by representing Dolci as an original Communist. His reaction was quick and sharp: he did not intend to collaborate with the Communists, but if single Communists were willing to collaborate with him, he had no objections, exactly as he had no objections against anybody else who was willing to do something for the poor and do it without delay. His slogan was: do something now, for people are dying.

Before his countrymen could forget this episode, he was in the middle of the news again. There were about two hundred unemployed in the village. On the other hand, there was only a path leading to the village, in spite of the fact that the authorities had promised a road for years. Dolci organized the unemployed to have them do the job themselves, without asking for any compensation. He fixed a day for the volunteer road-builders and let as many people as possible know about it.

As expected, a big crowd flocked to the place, and

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so did the police, armed to the teeth, as usual. When Dolci left the village, leading his unemployed with their picks and shovels, they were met by a police officer ordering them in the name of the law to return. Dolci told his unemployed to proceed and replied to the police officer that according to the Italian constitution work is not only a right of every citizen, but an obligation. The police officer repeated the order and the crowd, covering the neighboring hills and olive groves overlooking the bay, watched breathlessly what was happening. Dolci did not comply and immediately a company of policemen, with fingers on the triggers of their tommy guns, compelled the unemployed to withdraw, arrested Dolci and brought him to the ill-famed medieval prison of Palermo.

The result was another great scandal. Again press, radio and TV reporters descended on the village, many of the best Italian lawyers offered Dolci their assistance for nothing and the most outstanding among Italy's intellectuals joined as one man behind him. Among them were Alberto Moravia, Ignazio Silone, Cesare Zavattini and Carlo Levi, as well as many of the country's most famous film directors. The local authorities raged again, and the whole of the Italian press was either violently for or against Dolci and what he had done. He was accused of being a dangerous subversive, a Communist fellow traveler and—as it appeared that there were Protestants who sympathized with him—of having Protestant tendencies, in spite of his known Catholic background. For the feudal ruling class in Sicily, no accusations could have been worse. Even the local clergy took position against him and found themselves in embarrassing opposition to many outstanding Catholics in northern Italy, who defended him.

THE VITRIOLIC attacks against him continued, however, with undiminished fury, and reached a point in many conservative and highly respected papers where there was no proportion between the violence of emotion and the single imprisoned man it was directed at. Charges of immorality, too, soon came into the picture, when it was discovered that this strange man had found time to marry. He had married the nearly illiterate widow of a man who had been killed by the bandits and who had left her with five undernourished children. With her he had already had one child, was expecting another and, as if all this weren't enough, the couple had adopted four more orphans. For Dolci's enemies some strange sort of perversion had to be behind such behavior.

The trial which followed was exceptionally dramatic and finished with a complete victory for Dolci. After two months detention in the prison at Palermo, where he became the confidant of the inmates, he was declared not guilty, liberated from his handcuffs and received as a hero by an enormous crowd.

He was hardly out of prison before he took the next step. He moved from the little village to Partinico, a town not far from Palermo, well known too for its misery and backwardness. There he settled with his wife and family in one of the worst streets, called Spine Sante, "the crown of thorns," and there he lives now, sharing the life of its inhabitants. No sewage, running water only two hours a day in one waterpoint for the whole quarter, eight to ten persons in each room, chronic unemployment, chronic illiteracy, a shockingly high proportion of mentally defective, all sorts of crimes as normal occurrences, at the same time as the police in their barracks nearby practice shooting with automatic rifles without interruption.

Dolci is now the center of a team of sympathizers, all sharing the life of these people, who live exactly like the lowest caste in India. It is not only young men and women from all over Italy who have joined Dolci, but foreigners too, among them Frenchmen and Englishmen. He has connections, too, with the group round Abbé Pierre in Paris. His team has its outposts in the worst slums of Palermo, and it has penetrated a completely unknown world, which not even the Communists knew about or cared about.

This is the world he takes me into, past the street-sellers offering grilled bowels, along the railroad track which serves as latrine for the whole quarter, through the ruins of houses bombed in the war and now inhabited only in the cellars, until we come to a dark doorway in a narrow street. It is a room without windows, entered directly from the street. A young couple, just married, lives there, and the two have consecrated their lives to the poor. He is from northern Italy, she is a Swiss of prominent family.

Outside, the crowd calls without interruption: *Danilo, Danilo!* And the young couple tell us about their life, how they teach the children to read and write and how they try to help the grownups to escape from the vicious circle of unemployment and crime in which they are caught. On the walls of the windowless room there are naive drawings, some of them surprisingly good. They are made by the young illiterates at their first acquaintance with pencil, brushes and watercolors. In one corner there are primitive cooking facilities, in another a double bed. The deafening noise in the street finishes every night about two o'clock in the morning and starts again at six or seven.

AS WE set out for the ragpickers' quarter we are joined by a young Communist, who keeps on asking me questions about the uprising in Budapest, which seems to obsess him. The stench from the stagnant pools of sewage water is almost unbearable and big

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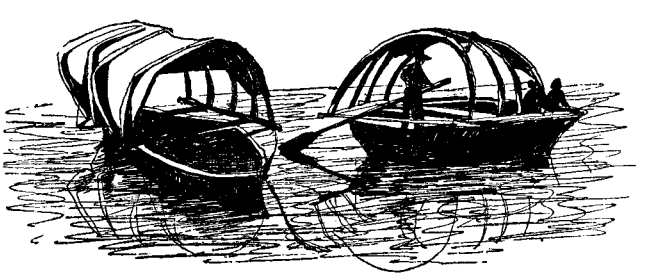
rats disappear under the heaps of junk lying in the open everywhere. Here too everybody is calling *Danilo* and triumphantly pointing at a brand new paved path which passes between the pathetic huts made of cans and bricks, where the ragpickers live. Their joy derives from the fact that the path has just been finished by the authorities as a result of the last hunger strike. Has Dolci been fasting here too? He explains in his quiet way that he and a couple of friends had in fact been fasting here recently. He doesn't attach much importance to the new paved path, but he thinks it is a good sign.

We knock at the door of another of the huts. Inside, round a table with a kerosene lamp, two young men are teaching a group of children. As we enter the two young teachers dismiss the children, who seem unwilling to leave, however, staring at us until they are finally ushered out. It was in this hut and together with these two young men—one a university student and the other a school teacher—that Dolci made his last hunger strike. They form another of his teams, living in this hut in spite of the fact that the floor, which is just plain dirt, is flooded each time there is heavy rain, and not even DDT bombs seem to be effective against the bugs that infest it.

Thus I am introduced little by little into this strange world, and human lives are revealed to me which are unbelievably tragic—prostitutes who let their masks fall and weep under the weight of their humiliations, people boiling the garbage from the slaughter houses, mostly horns and hoofs, and making a living out of the sale of the broth, or selling tickets at five cents each in homemade lotteries, the only prize of which is a housewife's bag full of scraps of food, people who exist by smuggling American cigarettes into the towns from the big wholesale smugglers off the coasts of Sicily, or collecting the lead and other metals from the shooting grounds of the police, or gathering edible snails and frogs, or cigarette butts, or acting as intermediaries between the customers of the pawnbrokers and the usurers who lend money with the receipts from the pawnbrokers as security.

And everywhere in the shadow is the powerful *mafia,* the State within the State, which the police fear to provoke and which grows fat on the misery. The *mafia* includes the big smugglers, the bosses of the fishing rackets, the owners of the brothels, the blackmailers, the bandits. . . .



THE COMMUNISTS were once very popular here, but the people feel they have been cruelly deceived. The Communists are the only powerful organization which openly fights the *mafia,* and this is generally recognized as a merit, but they have promised so much and done almost nothing. They incited the poor against the big landowners and made them occupy their lands, and the only result was beatings, tear gas bombs and sometimes bullets. It became more and more clear that the Communists used the poor only as pawns, for their own demagogic ends. The Communists promised them work, if they would join the Communist trade unions. Those who did found themselves even more jobless than before, for the employers boycotted the Communist trade unions, and those who wanted to emigrate discovered that none of the countries they wanted to go to would receive Communists or even ex-Communists. And the Communist Party itself became an exclusive hierarchy, with its red tape and its careerists. The pariahs discovered that they were too deep down even for the Communists to be really interested in them, and they realized instinctively that nothing much would change for them even if the Communists were to come to power.

Dolci's own background is Catholic and so is the background of most of his co-workers. But they often take a critical attitude toward the local clergy and accuse them of being passive and old-fashioned. They recognize readily what has been done for Sicily by the different Christian Democratic governments since the end of the war, particularly as far as land reform is concerned, but they maintain that it is not enough.

Many Communists and Protestants accuse the Church of being responsible for the terrible plight of these lowest layers of the proletariat. But the reply of Dolci and his followers is that the Church is *not* responsible, and they should know by now what they are talking about. The same misery in the same conditions is to be found in Orthodox Greece, in the Moslem Middle East and in many other quarters of the globe. According to Dolci and his friends the reason for this suffering is not religion, and they are determined to find out the why and the how of it. They consider themselves at the beginning of an enormous field of research, the exploration of which will take a long time.

The interest of their unique experiment is that it is valid not only for Sicily, but for the underdeveloped countries all over the world, including India. There is not much difference between "untouchables," whether they are Gandhi's in India or Dolci's in the slums of Palermo.

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THE ENTHUSIASTS

IN ONE OF HIS books H. Richard Niebuhr—who is an eminent Protestant theologian, like his brother Reinhold—makes a sharp distinction between a sect and a Church. Of course Niebuhr writes within a Protestant context; a Catholic theologian would not accept his distinction *in toto*. But even for a Catholic the distinction can be useful.

Dr. Niebuhr points out that a sect is originally made up of people who feel either that they have rediscovered a forgotten aspect of Christianity or that they have come upon some dazzling new Christian truth.

"Sectarians" are inevitably off-balance—their focal doctrine is not kept within proportion. It explains everything, far too much in fact. They find so much in it that they usually tend toward simplistic solutions and antagonize more conventional scholars and thinkers. That does not bother them in the least, for they are almost always anti-theological, putting much more stress on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit than on bookish knowledge. Actually they often regard the disapproval of ecclesiastical or academic worthies as a sign of God's favor.

Such groups usually change radically after the original members pass on. In Dr. Niebuhr's terms, once the "birthright" generation appears the "sect" starts to become a "Church." For institutionalizing becomes necessary. The original inspiration must be formulated if successors are to carry on. These changes usually result in a decrease of fervor and loss of "spirit." The Outside World, which the first generation turned from so happily, begins to entice. Compromise, the horror of zealots, makes its claim.

The "message" of the original sectarians may of course have an impact on more than one generation; the experiences of the founding group may be repeated rapturously by individuals again and again. But the "birthright" members rarely share this rapture. Their influence is likely to be exercised soberly in favor of forming a "Church." Then the converts, newly imbued with the founders' spirit, begin to talk about Reform and Primitive Observance.

Organization does seem to dampen "enthusiasm." Still, the argument for the visible Church that moves me is that human nature makes such an institution necessary: no one man can privately maintain a balance between the dazzling mosaics of Christian values. That is the work of an historical body which looks on everything *sub specie aeternitatis*.

Yet, despite its stern discipline, the Catholic Church does provide for the inspiration and enthusiasm found in sect-like "movements." Over the centuries the Church has embraced them again and again. It may have seemed sometimes as if the embrace was actually the kiss of death. But in fact the opposite is true. The promising Catholic movements, once full of vitality, which separated themselves from the Church's discipline are now remembered, if at all, as historical curios. Those that took their place within the Church seem to participate in the Church's own immortality.

The most notable example of course is that of the Franciscans. I was surprised that Richard Niebuhr should call the Franciscan movement a failure. It may be true that a medieval would have difficulty recognizing the modern manifestation of Franciscanism. Indeed the whole Church might be a little nonplussed if Saint Francis himself returned unchanged. I suppose that Dr. Niebuhr took all this into consideration. But "failure" strikes me as too strong. As Thomas Merton has pointed out, something of the Poverello's spirit yet remains in every Franciscan house—even those converted from swank country estates to monasteries. That is remarkable enough. And the preaching of Francis' message has helped all of us, who live seven hundred years after him, to fashion our vision of the Christian ideal.

The Franciscans themselves would be the first to admit that there are differences between their bustling modern order and the carefree zeal of the medievals. But it is the spirit that matters. If that is not all it once was, it may be that the price of institutionalizing (or preserving) a movement's genius comes high. Wise churchmen insisted that the Franciscan movement be moored to the discipline of the Church. Left on its own, it would have spent itself within a century.

The most significant movement within the Church in the United States that we have seen in our lifetimes is the Catholic Worker, which will soon mark its twenty-fifth birthday. The CW has many of the characteristics of the "sect," yet it has drawn its vigor from the Life of the Church. It has been no less spirited for that reason.

Less freedom-loving founders than the Catholic Worker was actually blessed with might long ago have institutionalized it out of existence. A less obedient daughter of the Church than Dorothy Day might have dissipated the energies that went into it. But the movement is still flourishing with a minimal loss of spirit and closer ties to the Mother Church than ever. Its presence among us is a tribute to the good sense of its founders and speaks well for the ecclesiastical wisdom of superiors who know the significant role "inspiration" and "enthusiasm" can play within Catholicism.

JOHN COGLEY.

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THE SCREEN

ARISE AND GO NOW

JOHN FORD loves his Ireland with a love that carries over into his work. His films are likely to flow with sentiment without wallowing in it—because he can point with pride and also with regret. He is a master at capturing characterization and the feel of place, as he has shown in such American-flavored movies as "Stagecoach," "Young Mr. Lincoln" and "Grapes of Wrath," in the Welsh "How Green was My Valley," "Long Voyage Home," and in such films with an Irish locale as "The Informer" and "The Quiet Man." Now, Ford has visited Ireland once again and has returned with a little gem, "The Rising of the Moon." Except for Tyrone Power, who introduces each of the three separate stories, and a few of the players, Ford's new film has an all-Irish cast; and it is mainly about the unpredictable Irish who can charm anyone who accepts them on their own terms.

In "The Majesty of the Law," based on a short story by Frank O'Connor, a police inspector (Cyril Cusak) visits a cottager (Noel Purcell) to serve a warrant on him for not paying the fine when he was convicted of assaulting an old enemy. During the course of the bright dialogue between the two men (not all of which is understandable, alas, because of the thick brogues) a great deal of poteen is drunk, friends come in to offer to pay the fine, and finally the battered enemy himself offers to pay. But the cottager will accept no offers. Upholding his family name (his thatched cottage is beside the ruined castle in which his family once lived) and wrapping his dignity about him like a cloak, the cottager walks to town and pays by going to prison. Though slight, the episode is nicely acted and compelling for its dignity and skill in putting over the message: "It isn't the castle that makes the king."

Next comes "A Minute's Wait," based on a delightful one-acter by Martin J. McHugh about a group of people on a local train at a country station. The piece is almost like an old Mack Sennett comedy with the passengers rushing for the refreshment bar when the stationmaster announces a minute's wait, then scurrying for the train, then rushing for the bar again when a goat has to be shoved on the train and another minute's wait is announced, then hurrying back to the train, then flying to the bar again when another minute's wait is necessary, etc., etc., until the passengers and the attendants and you are breathless. What keeps this zany little comedy from being completely slapstick is Ford's deftness in establishing the characters. In spite of all the confusion, we begin to know these folk and like them and even hope the young boy and girl will get together and that the barmaid will accept the stationmaster's odd proposal: "How'd you like to be buried with my people?" One can hardly blame the stuffy English couple for being mystified by the whimsical Irish who consider the getting on and the getting off as the best part of the train ride. And then at the end of this funny and character-revealing sketch, it is the annoyed English couple who miss the departing train from which the irrepressible Irish are gaily waving goodbye.

Although "1921," the third part of "The Rising of the Moon," based on Lady Gregory's play which gives the entire film its title, has a more sombre theme, about the rescue of a condemned political prisoner during the Black and Tan period, it too has irrepressible charm and spirit. Director Ford builds up a good suspense as he shows how the Irish hoodwink the English and how one man (Denis O'Dea) puts loyalty to Ireland and sympathy for the fugitive above his duty as a police sergeant. Ford tries to get a little arty in this episode with fancy camera angles and subdued lighting of city streets, but Irish characteristics, including *non sequiturs* so frustrating to the English, still win out. In fact, all three of these idiomatic sketches, so well written by Frank S. Nugent, produced by Michael Killanin and directed by John Ford, are a tribute to Irish character—illogical as it is, like the poteen in the first episode that is "so good that it's a shame to drink it." But to know them is to love them; and "The Rising of the Moon" does a first-rate job in helping us know them.

WALT DISNEY, who also likes to get the feel of people and place in his films, has come up with a historical item called "Johnny Tremain." Based on Esther Forbes' carefully-documented children's novel about a silversmith apprentice in and around Revolutionary Boston, the movie stresses the point that "liberty is for the young," and is appropriately dedicated to the youth of the world. It tells the story of

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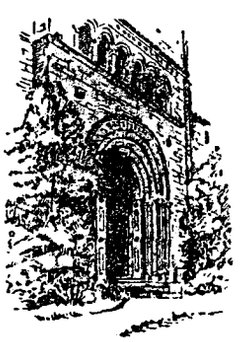

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an orphan (nicely played by Hal Stalmaster) who burns his hand while repairing a silver teapot and, unable to continue his apprenticeship, joins the Sons of Liberty; he helps their cause by delivering newspapers and secret messages, and becomes involved in such momentous events as the Boston Tea Party, Paul Revere's ride ("two if by sea"), and the famous encounters on April 19, 1775, after the storied "shot heard round the world." Along with the fictional characters are many historical figures, including James Otis (Jeff York) who founded the Sons of Liberty, Samuel Adams (Rusty Lane) and of course Revere (Walter Sandle) who reminds one and all that there's a time for casting silver and a time for casting cannon. Adults may find the script somewhat oversimplified and pedantic in its efforts to hit all the historical high spots; and Robert Stevenson's direction seems rather slow for such lively material. But the picture does have a certain charm and naive prettiness. And children will no doubt warm up to it with patriotic enthusiasm. Furthermore, "Johnny Tremain" says effectively what all the fuss in 1775 was about; and it won't hurt anyone to be reminded, or maybe even to be told for the first time, how our liberty had to be fought for.

ANOTHER REMINDER about another kind of liberty is to be found in "Silk Stockings," but this joke, about the Communist Russian who is won to the Decadent Democracies by their frivolities, is getting rather worn out now. Back in 1939 when Greta Garbo and Melvyn Douglas appeared in "Ninotchka," it was quite funny; however, by the time this movie was refashioned into a stage musical a couple of years ago, all the spring had been sprung out of the theme—and Cole Porter's music didn't help much either. Although this movie version of "Silk Stockings" is lighter and fresher than the stage musical comedy, thanks to dancers Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse in the lead roles, the main idea is very tired; and Producer Arthur Freed didn't make it more acceptable by stretching out so long a joke which was pretty thin in the first place.

As a musical movie, "Silk Stockings" has its bright moments—during some of the dances by nimble Fred and lovely Cyd, or when Astaire and Janis Paige kid the vogue for bigger movies in a giddy Porter song called "Stereophonic Sound," or when the three commissars (Jules Munshin, Peter Lorre and Joseph Buloff) clown around in snappy dialogue and musical numbers like "Siberia" and "Red Blues." The comedy falls flattest when it substitutes the risqué for humor, or when Director Rouben Mamoulian gets pretentious and forgets he's doing a light and pleasant musical. Maybe "Silk Stockings" is razzing itself in the Porter song that insists that all you've got to have is glorious Technicolor and breath-taking CinemaScope.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

BOOKS

Moral Personality and the Enduring Work

CRAFT AND CHARACTER IN MODERN FICTION. By Morton D. Zabel. Viking. $4.75.

By JAMES GREENE

IN HIS introduction to this group of critical essays, Morton Zabel reports that even in his earliest writings in the 1920's, "the relevance of the writer's moral personality and intelligence to his work, the relation of his character to his craft . . . emerged as an interest . . . and has persisted as a method of approach, an angle of interpretation during the ensuing years."

Once one accepts this "relevance" as a legitimate literary study, certain other dicta closely associated with Mr. Zabel's writings flow naturally from it, and these contribute to the importance of the present volume. As new evidence is uncovered to throw light on a particular writer's "moral personality" some adjustment is necessary in the evaluation of his works, and Mr. Zabel has rewritten many of the essays in this volume to take into account the new evidence. Beyond this, he warns in his introduction that even the opinions and interpretations he now makes can not "stay fixed and final."

Mr. Zabel, of course, does not use the concept of "moral personality" to separate the "good" man from the "bad," and proceed to a literary conclusion on that basis. He believes a man and his work are linked in the special sense that only through his work—his *craft*—can an author demonstrate "a nature capable of producing valuable and original art, of persisting in it, and of declaring himself a character through it."

There are critics, of course, who would oppose this relation of craft and character in literary judgments. To a school of critics that believes only the work itself to be "literary" in any enduring sense, and that only a work can generate a literary value, Mr. Zabel's interests might appear a pleasant but finally unimportant literary pastime. And in truth, within the critical scheme itself, the "moral" sense of such critics, being blunted, is a better weapon; against it Mr. Zabel's finely honed sensibilities are no defense.

"But 'pure' or absolute criticism," Mr. Zabel reminds us, "has been the rule in no century, least of all in ours." The "doctrinaire" critics have managed, in spite of their doctrines, to alter their premises and methods; literary estimates do not always survive the social and philosophical changes in history.

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Mr. Zabel's view seems to be, after all, no more than a particular application of T. S. Eliot's "historical sense"—that "perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." Past estimates, however wrong in their direction, are inevitably part of the modern critical intelligence. It is only when they have pretensions to infallibility that they are wrong essentially, and hence unusable. But a sense of the past, as well as a healthy respect for the future, can work against that failing which Mr. Eliot saw, perhaps with too great a pessimism, in "every nation, every race"—its being "even more oblivious of the shortcomings and limitations of its critical habits than of those of its creative genius."

Still, it is apparent that the separation between the author and his work could not survive the advent of the modern novel—a form too free, too random to escape becoming a vehicle, however worthy, for its author. The essays in this book give one critical approach to the change, an approach that, on the face of it, illuminates the works it treats and minimizes the rupture between the artist and his society by attempting to assess his "character" in terms meaningful to his society. Without such a meld the creative intelligence is simply not available to its own time and place. Mr. Zabel attempts these assessments with Dickens, with James, Conrad, Greene and others whose "characters seem so convincingly linked with the books they have written." Greene, for instance, is "significant . . . because of what he has done to recreate and reassert the moral necessity in his characters, and to project its reality, by symbolic means, into the human and social crisis of his time." This judgment springs as much from a study of Greene as from a reading of his works.

Perhaps the most successful application of his method is found in Zabel's essay on Dickens, which takes up some seventy pages of the present volume. Dickens, curiously enough, is almost a controversial figure in modern critical circles. He is accused of inconsistency, and a concomitant insincerity, by some; defended as a well-spring of modern fiction by others. Mr. Zabel traces both his private and professional careers simultaneously and, without offering apologies for it, finds in Dickens' "inconsistency" the very attenuation of values that, in more subtle and refined forms, is the backbone of modern fiction. This leads him to the observation that the novel is not alone "a fable of modern society at a point of crisis" but a fable that can "define deep-seated and permanent elements in the condition and ordeal of mankind."

Another major effort in the book is directed towards Conrad. Mr. Zabel devotes some eighty pages to this writer whom he feels takes us "so forcibly into the agony of the creative act" and demonstrates "what the artist's quarrel with himself can give to literature." Here more than in any of the other essays (though directed to the same ends) Mr. Zabel draws upon biographical data to filter out the meaning of Conrad's intense "personal participation in his creation." And though it is not the best exposition of Mr. Zabel's method, it is, in this reader's opinion, a meticulously organized and beautifully reasoned piece of criticism.

It is Mr. Zabel's announced intent to publish a companion to this volume which will deal with poetry, where he believes the equation of craft and character will always find its most intense expression. Together, the two volumes will mark a major attempt to bring within the compass of a single critical idea the creative product of the age. No one, not Mr. Zabel himself, would pretend that such an attempt can be wholly successful. But if, as seems likely, it brings to the surface those imperatives that only the creative intelligence can supply and helps renew the dialogue between the artist and his society, its major importance will have been established.

Absurd and Credible Events

THE PRINTER OF MALGUDI. By R. K. Narayan. Michigan State University Press. $3.50.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

IN A GARRET in Malgudi was the home of truth and vision; up a flight of wooden stairs were the offices of the *Banner,* an eight-page weekly edited by Srinivas and printed by Sampath, of the Truth Printing Works. This hilarious novel of contemporary India has the same admirable sweet-sour taste as had Mr. Narayan's previous novels, *The Financial Expert* and *Grateful to Life and Death,* but it is more artful.

Besides Srinivas and Sampath there are several other wholly round characters, and a large cast of amusing flat ones—round characters being those who, like actors outdistancing the director, surprise their author no less than his readers, and flat ones those obedient stills who remain what their author intended them to be, illustrative of his theme and responsive to his direction. Poor Ravi, the accountant whom love made a truly creative artist; the old miserly landlord who will not give his tenants a new tap, yet offers five thousand rupees to anyone who will marry his daughter, and is a genuine Sanskrit scholar and *Sanyasi;* Somu, the district board president turned successful film director—all are delightfully alive and entire.

The sequence of absurd yet realistically credible events reads like a folk tale: fortunately, Srinivas, who at thirty-seven has a wife and son to keep and no job, and who can find no one to print his projected journal, is taken in hand by Sampath, the rascally printer; unfortunately, Sampath's only printer's devil, a froth of an adolescent who works behind a curtain in the single room, quits; fortunately, Somu, for whom Sampath printed a speech, has gone into the film business, and Sampath, Srinivas, and Ravi all get jobs on a chimerical new location, five acres of wasteland beyond the

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river, with a gateway made of two coconut trunks across which hangs the sign *Sunrise Pictures;* unfortunately, just as Sampath has by buttering up the stingy old landlord got a promise of the daughter's five thousand rupees dowry as capital for the film, the old man dies; fortunately, the old man has left daughters whose husbands quarrel about his will and the tenants get a new water pipe, Srinivas' tenement is transformed, floors are smoothed with cement, walls scraped and lime-washed, tiles changed, and an independent water-tap is planted in his own back-yard; unfortunately, Sampath falls madly in love with Shanti, applicant no. 345 from Madras for the role of Parvathi in the film; fortunately, she is as good as she is beautiful; unfortunately, Ravi goes raving mad for love of her, attacks Shanti, and smashes up the studio; fortunately, Srinivas stands by Ravi, gets him out of jail, and supports his family as well as his own. And so on.

Mr. Narayan most deftly weaves for his readers a story that gives them something of the immense complexity of a civilization over five thousand years old: the complexities of contemporary Indian life and character are shown rooted in the national sense of *eidos* and the family sense of responsibility that is no longer applied to the family but to friends. Even the commercial aspects of life are permeated by the religious—the projected film is the story of the burning to ashes of Kama, God of Love, from the epic of Shiva, and Srinivas meditates daily, as do most of the other characters, all of whom quote from the *Upanishads* as freely as Victorian merchants from the Bible.

The insecurity, not merely of jobs, but even of food and shelter, is astonishing: no one ever in the morning seems sure he will eat that evening. Yet life goes on, and gaily too. The tremendous concern, not for the family, nor even for the member of the same caste or profession, but for the chance comrade, seems ridiculous to Western consciences, trained to a more competitive materialism. For here the family is not first: Srinivas and Sampath both will take food from the mouths of wife and children to feed a friend, and a fraternity and fellowship that are purely circumstantial links all these men together.

The women are extraordinarily marginal. Plain or painted, lovely or lowly, they wait, they serve, they seduce or scream, but they are totally insignificant except as the background from whose shadows the novel's characters emerge and into which they recede. Yet they are not underprivileged in any feminist-aggravating way. They have the same rights and responsibilities as women anywhere. While their men work to feed and clothe them, their wives can grumble, scold and quit, like any wives anywhere. Only nothing they do or are really matters, except when Sampath's infatuation with the lovely Shanti brings about his downfall and releases Srinivas from his strange bondage to the printer.

This is a gem of a tale. It would be easy to call Mr. Narayan an Indian Chekhov—but also silly, for the Russian soul is as different from the Indian as buckwheat is from rice. But Mr. Narayan is a most accomplished story-teller, and his tale will move old and young to pity and pleasure.

The Modern World

THE POPE SPEAKS. Edited by Michael Chinigo. Pantheon. $4.50.

By SISTER RITAMARY BRADLEY

THE HOLY SEE believes its teaching mission is to be a shaper of souls, not a merchant of words. Pope Pius XII takes these phrases from St. Augustine to describe the teacher, and he then makes clear that the Holy See is principally a teaching platform.

That role of teacher is met in this volume in a remarkable way. The editor has cut through chronology and varied documents to construct the thought of Pope Pius XII face to face with modern problems. Where there has been a major pronouncement on an issue, that text is used in full. Otherwise, as many as seven sources are spliced together under a single heading. In addition, the overall plan of the book provides both a panoramic and unified view. The major sections are entitled "Man," "Education, the Sciences, the Arts," "Church and Religion," "Society and Politics," and "Church and History." Well-chosen topics are grouped under these divisions. The sections unfold and broaden, so that there is a real progression from the problems that affect man in himself through increasingly larger social relations, to the place of the Church in the spiritual and cultural life of the world.

In a single volume many of the important Papal documents must be omitted, of course. But the achievement of the book is to bring a clear focus on modern problems posed by today's "impassioned whirl of happenings."

The book conveys an over-all tone and impression one could not easily gain through reading scattered and isolated Papal texts. This tone is one of quiet analysis, of seeking out the good even in atheistic materialism, of kindling the dying embers of truth with the fire of faith. For example, while lamenting that many areas of study and research have expanded in relative isolation from Christian thought, the Pope considers all the human arts and sciences and describes them as the "hesitations of the human language" studying the good things made by God. He thus demonstrates in the total teaching office that "aura of gentleness" which he commends along with rational arguments as ingredients for successful work in the schools.

The structure of the Church is suggested through a major segment from *Mystici Corporis,* with six supplementary selections. This is a rich and thought-provoking blend of sources. The latter part of the book brings into prominence the supranationalism of the Church, her desire to be at peace with all without betraying or abandoning that which belongs to God. This peace desired by the Church is not a mere gilded daydream from which there will be a rude awakening. Rather, the

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The Church Today, VI

The priest who serves as chaplain on a university campus faces special difficulties.

"Confronted with the bustling life of the modern secular campus, only the most unperceptive chaplain can fail to sense the presence of a barrier as intangible but as impenetrable as those 'force fields' of which we read in science fiction . . . . Aware of the real if limited good he does accomplish, the chaplain usually does not allow himself the luxury of feeling frustrated. Yet when he views the scope of his activities with a critical eye it is hard to avoid the conclusion that there is something radically askew. The oddity consists in the fact that welcome though he may be, as an unpaid adjunct of the student counselling service, he is neither expected nor — in most cases — allowed to make any intellectual contribution to the life of the campus . . . . To any man whose faith is not only vital but intellectually articulated, this bland dismissal of theology is a puzzling thing. Sometimes it is hard to credit the sincerity of this myopia. The notion of a conspiracy of godless intellectuals would seem to do more justice to the facts. Yet apart from occasional demonstrations of antipathy to religion on the part of some individuals, the phenomenon is too general and too widespread to be explained that easily. The blind spot is not for religion but for theology as such."

—James J. Maguire
in The Commonweal
April 5, 1957

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Church is shown coming firmly to grips with the many problems that threaten the welfare of nations, dealing with collective sin as Christ on earth dealt with individual sin.

This book is unusual, for an anthology, in the degree of unity and harmony it achieves. Though the collection aims basically at exposition, it attains to the status of a complete work through the cohesion of the whole and the interplay of the eternal and universal with concrete particulars.

The manuscript was submitted for the approval of Pope Pius XII before publication. The translations are for the most part those of the editor. These read very well, with a touch of liveliness absent from many English translations.

The glossary of terms is somewhat too brief to be a useful tool, and the footnotes identifying the texts put titles and dates in such subordination that some of the variety of source materials is obscured. Nonetheless, the chief purpose of the book is notably fulfilled. In this volume the Pope speaks, clearly and forcefully, from an incredible acquaintance with a wide range of problems, and with a spiritual and moral as well as cultural message. This is a book worth having, for reading and reference, and for passing on to others.

RECENT AND NOTABLE

The American Henry James. By Quentin Anderson. Rutgers. $6.50.

To many readers of James the thesis here propounded will seem composed equally of method and of madness. Yet it has already gained assent from competent, sensitive critics. Much of James' work, states Mr. Anderson, can be understood only in terms of emblems derived from his father's system of universal analogies. The book attempts to establish this thesis by analysis and example.

Madame Bovary. By Gustave Flaubert. Random. $3.95.

Little needs to be said about this book or its author except that this

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year marks the centenary of the book's publication. But this edition is notable because it offers a fine translation by Francis Steegmuller, author of *Flaubert and Madame Bovary*, editor of Flaubert's letters and a well-known critic.

Methods of Mental Prayer. By Cardinal Lercaro. Newman. $5.75.

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The Protestant Churches of America. By John A. Hardon, S.J. Newman. $5.

Father Hardon has provided here a short, informative manual on the Protestant Churches in this country. The history, doctrines, rituals and organizations of each of the major churches are presented in brief compass. This will serve as a sound reference book for those who do not require detailed information.

Baudelaire: A Self-Portrait. Edited by Lois Boe Hyslop and Francis E. Hyslop, Jr. Oxford. $6.

The editors have selected from a large correspondence those letters which they consider will best offer an accurate portrait of Baudelaire. Along with their translation of these letters they offer a running commentary which will greatly aid those who are not well acquainted with the poet. The letters do offer an image of Baudelaire that challenges the several popular images constructed by even the best critics.

REVIEWERS

James Greene is a frequent contributor.

Anne Fremantle is a contributing editor of The Commonweal. An excerpt from her novel-in-progress, *By Grave of Love*, appeared in a recent *New World Writing*.

Sister Ritamary Bradley, an editor of the *Sister Formation Bulletin*, has written for *The Commonweal* and other journals.

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